

HOURLY OF POWER OF 02.03.2008

GOOD MORNING/OPENING SENTENCE/INVOCATION

RAS: Good morning. And welcome to the Crystal Cathedral. We're glad you're here. You know God wanted you to be here and that's why you are here. He made it possible, He brought you, He called you. We've all been called. And so we've been called for a purpose and for a reason, and one of those reasons is to love people. So right now I want you to allow the love of God to flow through you as you shake the hands of those who are standing next to you and behind you, and shake their hand and say God loves you and I do, too. We have a fabulous worship service planned today. And you're part of it. And so I want to ask you to join with me right now as we pray.

Dear Heavenly Father, we thank You that You have called us here to this place, this moment, that You have a message for us. You have something You want us to hear, You have something You want us to do and so You've brought us here today, and so we thank You for the privilege and the opportunity that we have to be able to be moved by You, inspired by You, and so we thank You Lord for everything, we praise Your name, Amen.

HYMN - "Praise the Lord, O Heaven's Adore Him/Holy, Holy, Holy"

Praise the Lord! O heavens adore Him; Praise Him angels, in the height; Sun and moon, rejoice before Him; Praise Him, all the stars of light. Praise the Lord for He has spoken; Worlds His mighty voice obeyed; Laws which never can be broken for their guidance He has made.

Praise the Lord for He is glorious; Never shall His promise fail; God has made His saints victorious; Sin and death shall not prevail. Praise the God of our salvation! Worship Him, His power proclaim; Heaven and earth, and all creation, praise and magnify His name.

Holy! Holy! Holy! Lord God Almighty! All Your works shall praise Your name in earth and sky and sea. Holy! Holy! Holy! Merciful and Mighty! God in three persons; blessed Trinity.

SCRIPTURE – Sel. Verses from Psalm 148 - Donna

DONNA: Please be seated. Listen now to these words of praise from Psalm 148: Praise the Lord, praise the Lord from the heavens. Praise Him in the heights above. Praise Him all His angels. Praise Him all His heavenly hosts. Praise Him sun and moon. Praise Him all you shining stars. Praise Him you highest heavens and you waters from above the skies. Let them praise the name of the Lord, for He commanded and they were created. He set them in place forever and ever. He gave a decree that will never pass away. Praise the Lord from the earth, young men and women, old men and women, and children. Let everyone praise the name of the Lord for His name alone is exalted. His splendor is above the earth and the heavens. Praise the Lord. This is the word of the Lord.

INTRODUCTION TO ANTHEM – DON NEUEN

DON: You're all very familiar with the Hallelujah Chorus from Handel's Oratorio Messiah, but it's interesting to know that Ludwig van Beethoven, the great Beethoven also wrote a Hallelujah Chorus in a work entitled The Mount of Olives. Today, we'd like to sing the Beethoven Hallelujah.

ANTHEM - "Hallelujah"

Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah unto God's almighty Son, Hallelujah unto God's almighty Son. Praise the Lord, ye bright angelic choirs, in holy songs of joy, in holy songs of joy, in holy songs of joy; Praise the Lord in holy songs of joy, in holy songs of joy; Praise the Lord, ye bright angelic choirs, in holy songs of joy, in holy songs of joy.

Praise the Lord, ye bright angelic choirs, in holy songs of joy, in holy songs, in holy songs of joy. Praise the Lord, ye bright angelic, choirs, praise the Lord, ye bright angelic choirs, angelic choirs, praise the Lord in holy, holy songs of joy.

We proclaim His grace and glory, we proclaim His grace and glory, we proclaim His grace and glory, Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah unto God's almighty Son. Praise the Lord in songs of joy, praise the Lord in songs of joy, praise the Lord in Holy songs of joy.

We proclaim His grace and (glory,) we proclaim His grace and (glory,) we proclaim His grace and (glory,) we proclaim His grace and glory, Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah unto God's Almighty Son, unto God's Almighty Son. Hallelujah, Hallelujah unto God's almighty Son.

Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, praise the Lord in holy songs of joy, in holy songs of joy. Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, praise the Lord in holy songs, in holy songs of joy. Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, in holy songs of joy, in holy songs of joy.

RAS THANK YOU TO DON & CHOIR

RAS: Thank you Don, thank you choir.

INTERVIEW – Dr. BENJAMIN CARSON

RAS: ROBERT A. SCHULLER BC: BEN CARSON

RAS: I want to introduce you to a gentlemen who has been more than once. I want to welcome back to the Crystal Cathedral a distinguished neurosurgeon, a best selling author and a world leader in Christian communications, his name is Ben Carson. In 1987 Dr. Carson became the first person to ever successfully separate vertically conjoined twins. And today Ben remains the director of pediatric neurosurgery at John Hopkins Medical Center and is here to share his faith and his new book which is entitled, "Take the Risk." Please welcome to the Crystal Cathedral, Ben Carson.

BC: Thank you.

RAS: Ben, God loves you and so do we.

BC: Well thank you.

RAS: Name of the book is "Take The Risk: Learning to Identify, Choose and Live with Acceptable Risk."

BC: Right.

RAS: So, how do you calculate risk?

BC: Well you know, most people in life don't accomplish a great deal simply because they're afraid to take risk. And then there's a group of people who never accomplish anything because they take too many of the wrong risk. And in thinking about this, it really came about a few years ago, after the case of the Bijani twins, these were the young women from Iran who were joined at the head and their dream was to be separated. And I wasn't particularly enthusiastic about being involved but it became clear that they were going to have this done in Singapore, whether I helped or not. So I felt obligated to go. But I learned a lot

from those young women, as I put myself into their shoes, and recognized that you know they had very, very different aspirations. You know, one wanted to be a journalist, one wanted to be a lawyer, they were very intelligent. They both had college degrees. They both had law degrees even though only one wanted one. But you know they were extraordinarily intelligent and you know they said something to me that really struck me. They said we would rather die than spend another day together. And that seemed kind of harsh but then I put myself into their shoes and I began to recognize why are people willing to take risk? Why are people who incarcerated for life, or who find themselves in horrible situations, willing to put their lives on the lines? And I began to realize that these young women were in that situation and then I began to extrapolate that into many of the situations that occurred in my own life, and why was I willing to take certain types of risk, certain types of surgical cases where people said to me it'll never work, don't bother, don't waste your time.

But I came upon a relatively simple formulation. Said ask yourself four basic questions: what's the best thing that happens if I do this, what's the best thing that happens if I don't, what's the worst thing that happens if I do it..

RAS: If I do this what's the..

BC: ..what's the worst thing that happens if I don't.

RAS: Sure.

BC: And then a couple of ways of refining those questions, but of course in order to answer those questions, it's vitally important that you know who you are. And it's vitally important that you know what your value system is. If the most important thing for you is glory and adoration of mankind, you're going to answer certain questions differently than if the most important thing for you is to praise the name of the Lord. So you have to clearly know what your value system is and basically that's what I go through in this book, helping people get in touch with who they are and asking intelligent questions about how you make things happen in a successful way. And really when you stop and you think about it, if people weren't willing to take risk, would we have airplanes today? Would we have lights? Would we have virtually any of the things that give us the ability to be comfortable? Would we even know where certain parts of the world were if there weren't people who weren't willing to take a risk and begin to explore areas, even when they were maybe comfortable where they were. And I think this is one of the reasons that the good Lord gives us an inquiring mind, and gives us these incredible frontal lobes with the ability to extract information from the past and the present, and to formulate it into a vision. And when we have a vision and we have a dream, then we begin to understand what kinds of risk are worthwhile for us to take.

RAS: The Bible tells us without vision men perish.

BC: That's correct.

RAS: And tell us the end of the story of these women from Iran. Were they separated?

BC: They in fact were separated but they did not survive, unfortunately. But you know there's several cases now that have survived, and what we learned from all of those things, goes on to provide us with information which gives us the ability to do things later on. And you know I think about many of the types of operations that we do now. For instance, you know, this past week I did an operation on someone where I had to enter their posterior fossa, go down to the area where the brain stem was. They had a condition called trigeminal neuralgia. I do that on adult patients. But this is something that we can do relatively routinely. It's a standard neurosurgical procedure but it eliminates intense pain of the face. Well,

when that operation was first envisioned, posterior fossa operations by Walter Dandy, the famous Johns Hopkins neurosurgeon, the first 13 cases he tried all died. Now can you imagine how discouraging that was, and I frequently wonder what he said to the 14th patient when they said how did the other 13 do? But he probably said no one's complaining. But at any rate the fact of the matter is he was able to develop that and now it's something that we can do in a standard way. But it would not have been done if he were not willing to take those risks. But I don't want anyone to go away with the impression that you see a risk, you take it. Obviously there is a measured evaluation that goes into which are the appropriate risks, what are acceptable risks, and once you know those, you can begin to live a much more comfortable and useful life. And I also point out the fact that there are so many risks that are overblown in our society. And I don't want to give away everything that's in there, but you know we spend an enormous amount of money on things that we don't have to spend money on because the risk is hyped and it's not really very substantial, so it gives us the ability to really analyze what's correct for ourselves.

RAS: Sure. Well we think about risk when you bring up this whole topic of protecting ourselves, and it kind of brings me to the next thing that I noticed in your book and that is your bought with cancer and tell us about that.

BC: Well, you know that was, you know I was one of those people who did everything appropriately. Got your annual physical exam, didn't defer any part of it, got my PSA's, but I discovered unfortunately that you know all of a sudden, I was looking at the clock when I was in the operating room and I never used to. I could do a ten/twelve/fifteen hour operation no problem. But now the clock was important. I said something has changed and I went to see the chief of urology and he said you know, let's repeat your PSA and we did and it was slightly elevated, and he said I think you should have a prostate biopsy. Now if anybody ever told you a prostate biopsy doesn't hurt..

RAS: They haven't had one.

BC: ..it doesn't hurt them. Okay, that's the part they left out. But after about the sixth core biopsy, you're saying, you know cancer's not that bad, but at any rate you know it turns out, after that biopsy that I got bad news that not only did I have cancer, but it was a very high grade malignancy. And then I had an MRI to make sure it hadn't metastasized and unfortunately the MRI looked bad, there were all these lesions up and down my spine, and interestingly enough, the next day on the radio there was an announcement that I had a glial blastoma, a malignant tumor of the brain and then I had a liver cancer, lung cancer, bone cancer, you name it I had it, I was dying, I had died already. One lady called my office and said I heard Dr. Carson was dead. I need to speak to him. But it was really pretty amazing.

RAS: I hear you had a wonderful funeral.

BC: That's right. But there was such an outpouring. I had no idea that so many people cared from all over the world. Letters from janitors to President and Mrs. Bush saying they were praying for me. And I guess the Lord just got tired of hearing about me, because it turns out that the lesions in my spine were a congenital anomaly of the bone, perfectly benign situation, and I was able to have surgery by Dr. Walsh who invented the nerve sparing prostatectomy, the cancer was within one millimeter of breaking through but it hadn't broken through yet. So I'm cured. The Lord is good.

RAS: That is good news.

BC: But one of the things that that really brought to me was how important our healthcare is and I talk a lot in this book about measures that we need to take and how we need to understand that the greatest gift we have is our health. You know

there are so many people who will spend three/four hundred dollars taking their family to a game, but if someone says you have a twenty dollar co-pay for a physical exam, they just about have a stroke. You know, people forget about what things are really important and we need to keep those things in perspective and I think it really puts risk into the right perspective in our lives.

RAS: You know, you have mentioned that you could be the poster child for a child at risk. Why don't you explain that a little bit.

BC: Well you know I had all the risk factors that people think about growing up in a single parent home, in dire poverty in the inner city, a member of a racial minority, poor self esteem, a violent temper, and certainly if you were to look at all those things, you'd say that guy is not going to amount to anything. And there were a lot of things that happened along the way that involve me coming to an understanding of who I was, and what my value system was, and having a mother who also was willing to take risks. She was willing to be ostracized by her friends who would say to her, you can't make boys stay in the house and read books. They'll grow up, they'll be sissies, they'll hate you, all that kind of stuff. But she really did not listen to those individuals and to her credit, you know, I turned out to be a brain surgeon, my brother turned out to be an engineer, so it clearly was not a fluke and there are definitely ways, if you can instill, particularly within a child and I talk a lot in this book about the importance of raising children the right way, to give them the appropriate amount of risk because you've got to realize that young people are risk takers. They like to take risk. However, as their parents, we have the ability to actually control that risk in a way. And we have to allow them a certain degree of freedom, but if we do that in a controlled way, they can get all of their need to take the risk out of the way, and you can have your ability to keep them safe. And I think that's what wise parenting is all about.

RAS: You know you give a lot of credit to your mother and rightfully so. But are there things that you can say that you specifically did to make the statistics work in your favor?

BC: Yes there are definitely things that I did, one of the things, for instance was learning how I learned. And you know everybody learns in a different way. One of the biggest risks that I took was, for instance, as a first year medical student, I did poorly on the first set of comprehensive exams and I had to see my counselor and he said you look like an intelligent young man, I bet there are a lot of things you could do outside of medicine. And he encouraged me to drop out of medical school, said I wasn't really cut out for medicine, and he would even help me to get into another career path. And I couldn't do it. It was the only thing I'd ever wanted to do. I felt a strong calling from God that I was supposed to be in medicine and I said I'm not going to listen to him and I'm going to take this risk. I analyzed, I said you are not an oral learning, that is I don't learn a lot from listening to boring lectures. I'm very visual. So I said I'm going to stop going to those eight hours worth of boring lectures and I'm going to spend that time reading. Now that was a big risk, not going to class. However, when I started doing that, the rest of medical school was a snap. And when I went back to my medical school as a commencement speaker, I was looking for that counselor, because I was going to tell him he wasn't cut out to be a counselor.

RAS: So Ben, we want to thank you for writing this book "Take the Risks: Learning to Identify, Choose and Live with Acceptable Risk." You know you've truly had to do that in numerous circumstances and we just want to thank you for being the person you are.

BC: Well thank you. It's been fun and I want to thank you and I want to thank your dad for the risks that you took in putting this ministry together, and that was quite a story in and of itself.

RAS: Yes it is.

BC: Thank you.

RAS: Well Ben, God loves you and so do we. Thank you.

BC: Thank you.

INTRODUCTION TO RUSH OF FOOLS – RAS

RAS: We have a privilege this morning of having one of the hottest, newest groups in music today. They're entitled Rush of Fools, and they debuted this year with their first album, and they've been named the best new album in multiple publications and are top artists on MySpace. MySpace means that different people have voted them their favorite artist, and their first single, Undo hit number one on the charts and continues to be a hit today, but what they really care about most is showing people the love of Jesus through their music. Would you please welcome with me Rush of Fools?

First of all, can one of you tell me how you come up with the title Rush of Fools?

MALE: I'm shocked you had to ask that. We love telling about our name because it means more than just the way that we look. It comes from 1st Corinthians, chapter one, where Paul was kind of sharing with His church plant about where they've come from and where God's brought them, and we are blown away by the fact that he reminds them that before Jesus came and saved their life, that they were nothing special. They were normal people, they were average Joe's. And in verse 27, he says, "Consider your calling, brothers, cause not many of you are wise according to the standards of the world, not many of you are strong." He says then, "But God has chosen what is foolish in the world to shame the wise and He's chosen what is weak to shame the strong." And that blows us away because that's who we feel like we are. We are the foolish and we are the weak, and so we wanted our name to kind of resonate that.

RAS: You're singing a song entitled, Undo. Tell us about that.

MALE: Well God put it on the radio for us. We wrote it about a year ago, just over a year ago and God put it on the radio for us and we really wanted to write a song that just kind of described the grace of God in our lives, and how we were desperate for it and how we needed it, and we've been able to have the privilege to hear stories from people all over the world, from here to Australia to the UK and we've heard stories of people that were in marital affairs and they had left their family and God has used the lyrics to our song to bring their families back together. We've heard people that were struggling with just addictions, whether it was drugs or some sort of sexual addiction and we've seen people come through that. And we've also seen people who were ready to kill themselves and they've shared with us their story of wanting to kill, you know, commit suicide, and again they just shared about the lyrics to this song has been a theme song for their life. And we're honored as a band, because we don't think it was us and we don't think it was the song, we just think that's God's good grace to His people.

RAS: Well will you sing it for us?

MALE: We'd love to!

RAS: Please, please do.

MUSIC GROUP – RUSH OF FOOLS – "Undo"

I've been here before, now here I am again standing at the door and praying You'll let me back in. But to label me a prodigal would be only scratching the

surface of who I've been known to be. Turn me around, pick me up, undo what I've become, bring me back to the place of forgiveness and grace. I need You, I need Your help, I can't do this myself. Cause You're the only one who can undo what I've become.

I focused on the score, but I could never win. I was trying to ignore a life of hiding my sin. To label me a hypocrite would be only scratching the surface of who I've been known to be, yeah. Turn me around, pick me up undo what I've become, bring me back to the place of forgiveness and grace. I need You, I need Your help, I can't do this myself. Cause You're the only who one can undo what I've become.

Make every step lead me back to the sovereign way that you turn me around, pick me up, undo what I've become, bring me back to the place of forgiveness and grace. I need You, I need Your help, I can't do this myself (Jesus). Cause You're the only one who can undo, yes You are the only one who can undo, You are the only one who can undo what I've become. Cause You're the only one.

RAS THANK YOU TO RUSH OF FOOLS

RAS: Thank you gentlemen, we appreciate it very, very much.

MESSAGE/PRAYER - ROBERT A. SCHULLER

"Believe It! See It! – Part 2"

RAS: The New Testament opens up with the announcement of the birth of Jesus Christ. And then Jesus Christ's jumps from there quite quickly to Christ being baptized and being tempted by Satan for 40 days in the wilderness. And then He begins His ministry. He calls His disciples and there in Galilee He delivers the greatest sermon ever preached beginning with the Beatitudes: "Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn for they will be comforted." And He goes and gives us the greatest sermon ever preached.

And following that sermon He goes into the city of Capernaum and there the centurion of the city, almost every city in the time of Christ had a centurion. And there was a centurion in Capernaum, which is where Peter's home was. Which is where Jesus spent most of His life during His ministry in Capernaum and there was a centurion there. And a centurion is a Roman commander who oversees a hundred troops. That's a lot and this centurion comes to Jesus and he says, "Jesus I have a servant who is sick." And Jesus says, "I'll come right over." And he goes, "No, no, no You don't have to do that." Then he goes on to remind Jesus of what an important man he is. He goes, "You got to realize Jesus I'm a centurion. I understand how these things work. You see I just tell this guy to do this and he does it. And I tell my other lieutenants to go do this and they go do it. And I tell my servants I want this and they bring it." He says, "I don't have to do anything I just give the command and it's done. Jesus You don't have to come to my house, just give the command and I know that my servant will be healed." Christ is dumbfounded. The bible says that He was astonished at the words of the centurion. When Jesus heard this, He was astonished and said to those following him, "I tell you the truth I have not found anyone with such great faith."

Faith: what is it? In Hebrews it says, "It's the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." The centurion couldn't see his servant being healed but he believed it. He knew that if Jesus simply said the words he would be healed. He had that deep commitment and belief where he knew that he would be

healed. And later Jesus said to the centurion, "Go; it will be done for you. Just as you have believed it and the servant was healed at that very hour."

Some people say I believe it when I see it. I've got to confess I've been guilty of that. There have been times in my life where I have just through my arrogance and my lack of humility people have come to me and said I'm going to do this that and the other thing and I go I'll believe it when I see it. Anyone here want to make that same confession today? If you haven't said it, you've thought it; same thing! And as a result of that we just haven't believed it. But the truth is when we believe it we see it. And that's what the bible continues to tell us. That's what faith is all about that when we believe it we see it.

I can't tell you how many people that I talk to in the course of a year who just do not believe that they're going to go to heaven. And if they're going to go to heaven it's just going to be by luck. They just aren't convinced that they have the opportunity, the means or the will to go to heaven. And I explain to them and share with them the fact that they can have what I call a ticket to heaven. And would you like a ticket to heaven? Is there anyone here who would like a ticket to heaven? We have got thousands of tickets to heaven. It is my goal to give away a billion tickets to heaven! Now you may be laughing but I actually have my ticket. And you have yours and few others have yours. How many people have their tickets? You don't have to pull it out right now you can just keep it handy. In fact, my wife's grandmother passed away in August. She was a hundred and almost a hundred and one years old. And in her casket she's holding her ticket to heaven. And the ticket to heaven is just a piece of plastic that we're giving away. But the piece of plastic has words on it and it's the words that have meaning and it's the words that are the ticket, it's not the piece of plastic. The words on the piece of plastic says, "Anyone who comes to me I will in no way cast out - Jesus Christ." That's the ticket to heaven. You sign it, you accept it, and you believe it.

And I have a dear friend of mine who lives in a gated community in Mission Viejo. In fact he's my chiropractor. He wrote a book with me entitled "Possibility Living: How to add years to your life and life to your years with God's health plan." But I go to his house on Friday mornings and what happens is I turn around the corner and guess what I see. I see a guard shack and two big gates and before I can get through those gates I have to get a pass from the guard. I'm not getting through those gates unless the guard let's me in. Well I'm on his permanent list, because I'm his permanent friend I guess. And so I pull up to the guard shack and I say I want to go see Dr. DiSiena. Now often they'll say sure go ahead. But other times they'll say, well just a minute what's your name? Robert Schuller, Robert Schuller? I go yes. Oh are you your father's son? And I say yes, oh well just a minute, you're on the list? I go yes I am. Well let me check and they close the door and meanwhile my anxiety's going up, okay are they going to let me in? Do you know what I mean? You go to a guard gated community you just never know if the guards going to let you in. You just don't know, you're going and I've had it happen numerous times they come out and they said I'm sorry you're not on the list. I am on the list. I come in here every week; I'm on page two. Go to your computer and check page two. And they'll go to their computer and they'll check the computer, oh sorry Mr. Schuller. Here you go, have a nice day and they give me the pass. I got through. I've gone to other communities where I've been turned away. It's a terrible feeling getting turned away. Having the gates closed.

But the facts are that when the time comes for us to meet Jesus Christ in heaven we have a ticket to heaven. And the ticket to heaven is Jesus Christ. It's very clear: "Anyone who believes in me will have eternal life." Those are the promises of Jesus Christ. And as we continue to believe in Him we know that we will see

Him someday face to face. And that is a reality that we can all be confident of and assured of. And if you'd like a ticket to heaven just to give you that extra bit of insurance or conviction or help you build your faith, just write to us we'll send you one, we'll send you five, we'll send you ten. We have sent these out by the thousands, if you want to give them away. Just write to us, we'll give them to you. Just sign your name to it, stick it in your pocket like I do. I keep it with me all the time and it reminds me of my assurance; my ticket to heaven.

There are people who go through life and they say you know I believe in Jesus Christ and I think I'm going to go to heaven but I'm not sure I'm good enough. So I'm going to live as good as I can and maybe I'll make it. And they think they have a temporary pass into heaven. Well the facts are that when you accept Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior you receive a full time pass into heaven that you will go to heaven and it's not retractable. You don't have to worry about it. It's nothing you have to stress over. Am I going to be good enough to get into heaven? I can't tell you how many people stress over being good enough to get into heaven. And that is something we never have to do as Christians.

It reminds me of people I golf with. They get so stressed out over the way they play! I golf with nothing but a bunch of hackers. A hacker is somebody who shoots in like the high nineties. A good score, their best scores they might get in the low nineties. You know like they have goals like I have, I'm going to shoot my age someday and that's why I want to live to be a hundred and twenty. We were golfing this one day and just before we started a guy was making the turn which means he just finished golfing nine holes and was getting ready to golf the second nine holes. And I said how you doing? He says oh not too good. Well, our big line when we golf is hey you know at least we don't have to make a profession out of this thing; at least we're not pros. I said how you doing? Oh not so good. And I said well it doesn't matter unless you're a pro! And he goes, I am. Well and I just kind of raised my eyebrows and walked away.

The good news is that there is only one pro when it comes to heaven and His name is Jesus Christ. He is the professional who did it perfectly. So we don't have to do it perfectly! We cannot live a perfect life. We can do it, we can strive, we can try but the facts are no matter how hard you try it will never be good enough to earn your way into heaven. It doesn't happen that way. It's a gift. Plain and simple, it's a gift. Anyone who comes to me is the promise. I will in no way cast out. That's it, it's that simple.

Fifteen eighty six in a little town in Heidelberg Germany a catechism was written. It's called the Heidelberg Catechism. It's actually one of the professions of this faith, of this church. Something we use to teach. It's been something we've been using for four hundred and fifty years. And the way they used to teach was very simple. They ask a question and they give an answer. And so the Heidelberg Catechism opens up with this question: What is your only comfort in life and in death? That's the question. The very first question. What is your only comfort in life and in death? And the answer is this: that I belong. Oh, isn't that beautiful? That I belong! That I'm a member! Not to myself, mind you. It says that I belong not to myself but to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ that not a hair on my head can fall without the will of my Father in heaven so that all things work for my salvation. Therefore, I am wholeheartedly willing and ready to live for Him. So when we become members we don't sit there and try to earn our way in, we're already in! We do things because we just want to make it better. We want to make the world a better place, we want to make our friendships better, we want to be used by God to serve people, to love people. And that's what Jesus told us to do. Love one another as I have loved you.

And so we are called today by Christ to become members of His family. To receive our tickets to heaven as a gift from God. Nothing that we can earn nothing, that we can purchase, it is a gift. Today I want to encourage you to first and foremost accept the invitation to know Jesus Christ and to be a part of His family. To simply say a prayer and you say yes Jesus, I want to belong. You simply come to Him and say I want to be a part of Your family. And then if you want to become a part of the Crystal Cathedral, you can join the Crystal Cathedral as well. You can go online, you can attend one of our member's classes here in the Cathedral if you live nearby, there's many ways that you could participate in the life of this church. The key is to belong. So today I want to invite you to come and to profess your faith in Jesus Christ. To say yes to Him. Join the fellowship of believers who know that they truly will see the beauty of God forever.

Dear Heavenly Father, we thank You that You are calling us today. That You love us, that You care about us, that You desire for us to see the beauty today in the land of the living. That You want to bring healing and hope and good news into our lives. And so it is that a centurion two thousand years ago showed us how simple and easy it is: come to Jesus and ask Him. Come to Jesus and say Jesus bring healing into my life, into my soul, into my heart. Jesus, cleanse me of my sin and make me whole. And today Jesus will. He will. And so we thank You Lord for everything, and we praise Your name always, because we know that as we believe we shall see, Amen.

HYMN – “O Bless the Lord My Soul”

O bless the Lord, my soul! His grace to me proclaim! And all that is within me join to bless His holy name.

O bless the Lord, my soul! His mercies keep in mind! Forget not all His benefits! The Lord to me is kind.

He clothes me with His love; Upholds me with His truth; And like the eagle, He renews the vigor of my youth!

Then bless His holy name, Whose grace has made me whole, Whose loving kindness crowns my days! O bless the Lord, my soul!

NEXT SUNDAY/BENEDICTION - RAS

RAS: Next Sunday, we're having a fabulous bass from the Metropolitan Opera who's going to be singing and sharing his story. His name is Morris Robinson. And with that, let me give you a closing benediction.

Now may the blessings of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, give you the faith to believe and as that belief grows, may you truly see your dreams, your hopes, your aspirations fulfilled through the power of God, Amen.